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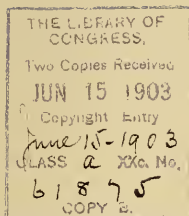
# FLIMFLAM, SOCIETY GIRL

BY  
LIONEL JOSAPHARE  
AND  
BEATRICE VAN SLOPE



Published by  
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**Flimflam, Society Girl.**



## Flimflam, Society Girl.

FLIMFLAM has lived. The glorious girl is dead.  
The florist and the keeper of the hearse  
Have shrined her sleep and garlanded her head  
For her last function. Be none heard to curse.  
But the torch-bearing maker of the verse,  
Extol the passing ship, once fraught with sweets,  
That with sweet-giving earth must now commerce  
And bear their viewless tides with ghostly fleets.  
Pale friend, surviving friendship recollects  
The warmth which your unanswering hand rejects,  
Your smile's caprice, the satire in your eye,  
Your instant pout, the feminine effects,  
Your tiny voice, from which the wit would fly,  
And love that rued till you forsook the day,  
Stopped your heart's music and in silence lay.

No more, in life's propinquity found equal,  
Shall we explain the world which gave us place;  
Yet shall these margins frame no weeping sequel  
Unto a friendship greater than love's grace.  
Content to die, she turned her lessening face  
From the rant laughters of the fools' emprise;  
Had laughed with them, and when she ill'd apace,  
Smiled with her lips and suffered with her eyes.  
Rare spirit, not in painful days I paint her,  
But in the spritesome life she lived acquaint her.  
Songs wrote she, of wee men in little ways —  
Little, and cannot saint nor help unsaint her.  
Not strategic with passion's makeshift phrase,  
She wrote; for when with sweet occasion prest,  
She took her pen and quickly all confessed.

BEATRICE Dora Flimflam G. Van Slope,  
Daughter of J. Van Slope, the Iron King,  
And niece unto the Emperor of Soap,  
Likewise his brother of the Copper Ring,  
Sister of Daisy, who was wed last Spring  
To Cedric Alyn, who divorced her soon  
And married Villamain, who used to sing  
But left Grand Opera for her honeymoon, —  
Well, Flimflam lived with banners on Nob Hill,  
Dressed so superb she made the crowd stand still,  
Rode in a blue barouche with swarthy horses,  
That cost three thousand plunks, (I saw the bill)  
Ne'er ate at dinner less than fifteen courses,  
Wrote poetry, chewed gum, golfed, slanged her caddy,  
And went to church on Sundays with her daddy.

That name: "Beatrice" was her Proper Noun  
As spelt by Fame for signal and affair;  
"Dora" looked modish once when written down,  
And, liking its effect, she left it there.  
Her chum-girls called her "Flimflam;" "G." was bare  
Of record or intent save that 'twas G.  
Then came "Van Slope," of which, as told elsewhere,  
From her true sire, we trust, she was feoffee.  
Even as her name exceeded usual need,  
Her wit went wayward when she gave it speed.  
Freaksome in heart and hand as twenty elves,  
Her wealth caused women to forget the deed  
E'en as her words made men forget themselves.  
A million thrills they had in her survey,  
Or were dead nothings when she went away.



Tout au contraire, the girl was never a flirt:  
 For, privileged to mobilize her eyes,  
 How could she help it if those glances hurt  
 Whene'er she gave her beauty exercise?  
 Her beauty — ah! Now let the Muse arise  
 To seemingly preposterous expressions;  
 But let that Muse be watched by one more wise,  
 Lest ardor trespass beauty's rare possessions.  
 And yet 'tis author's license, nay, his duty:  
 Dispelling the habilaments of beauty,  
 And when false covering defeats the eye,  
 Blow embers in the rubbish cold and sooty.  
 And yet the blushing critic would say "Fie,"  
 Should truth usurp the fashion's false demesne  
 And dream of beauty 'twixt the seen and unseen.

Flimflam was small, (too small for melodrama)  
 Full-dressed, full-jeweled, fit for fads and styles,  
 Slim-hipped, but, like the coast of Alabama,  
 She was more than could be set down in miles.  
 It would be vain conceit to rate her smiles;  
 And eyes, 'twere better artlessly admire —  
 Eyes that, like bluebirds in the golden files  
 Of tress and curl, added their trembling fire.  
 Fashion's accoutrements upon her sat,  
 Nor standing room left one more frill thereat —  
 A hundredweight of girl and fifty pounds  
 Of dress and jewelry, hair-pomp and hat;  
 Which froth of style blew free from beauty's mounds,  
 That, crushed for space, divulged — O Muse, give o'er:  
 'Twere impoliteness to describe her more.

Beholding Flimflam, I beheld it odd  
(Yet, turning toward the world, not strange at all)  
That flowers of love sprung fragrant where she trod,  
Save that the heart she loved she could not thrall.  
Wildly her wisdom with her love would brawl  
That she, since love could not find love in one  
Made manifest in fancy's choicest call,  
Should let the calf in his own meadow run.  
If, dreaming near the full-rigged rose, one tear,  
In forming, made the garden disappear,  
How could grief's flood have Winter every season  
And make Spring's animation seem not near!  
Therof imparting to herself no reason,  
And, blenching from the parlor's laughing band,  
In verse oft drifted out of sight of land.

If, to the access of her inmost love,  
Beatrice let an ugly world inquire,  
'Twas in her verses dreaming of above  
Being lit with what she saw not in the mire.  
And if 'twere asked what splendors could inspire  
A man to burn his heart in other places,  
When Flimflam's beauty was for him afire,  
No fitting answer the inquirement graces.  
With what might was his own love reimbursed  
That he blessed one and left the other curst,  
Smiled on one's prayer and laughed at other's wit?  
Perhaps 'twas that he'd loved the less heart first.  
Deep in what nether joy her thoughts could flit,  
They found no biding-place or landmark dome,  
But in her sorrow's vaults they made a home.

'Twas since her first sweet visit, when the Muse  
 Had taught the maiden's poet-soul to climb,  
 And kissed her sweeter scarlet to confuse  
 Her brain with bliss and make her talk in rhyme,  
 That Flimflam, pensive with the fondest crime  
 That e'er found privilege in a woman's breast,  
 Made wildered passion keep poetic time,  
 And in her verse her wasteful love confessed.  
 O love that in most noxious scorn can live,  
 Or to our greatest feats a greater give,  
 Why are your wishes bodily and real  
 And your attainments dim and fugitive?  
 On such as Flimflam, lost in the ideal  
 Of love and poetry, pour forth thy wine,  
 To feed the fiends that else on tears will dine.

Beatrice Dora Flimflam G. Van Slope,  
 Fine-framed, lank-armed and little to be seen,  
 Did long with fashionable envy cope,  
 And with good will urge through the glad routine;  
 Had raged all trails, terrestrial and marine;  
 But now defaced with Mirth's inelement kiss,  
 Craved rest's dear Spring to key life's branch with green,  
 And freshen with new sap things now amiss.  
 Pale-mouthed from scores of teas and more cotillions,  
 Eye-languid with their goldens and vermilions,  
 Staled with a thousand suppers, fagged with wit,  
 Tamed with the light in parlors and pavilions,  
 Dancing on valor, dining on her grit,  
 At last her hundred pounds of girl gave o'er,  
 With scarce the will to walk across the floor.

Then from life's frolic Flimflam took to quiet,  
Was good in all things and in nothing bad,  
Soliloquized upon a stingy diet,  
Forsook the styles and waved off every fad.  
In foam of thready laces thinly clad,  
She kept her room, in whose entire seclusion,  
Friends might not cheer nor family make her mad,  
Or of the outside bring a least allusion.  
A cup of milk, a drouthy screed of toast  
Were now her lot from oysters to the roast;  
To say naught of the missing courses after,  
With which the doughty diner aye is dosed.  
Nor might she smile or be addressed with laughter,  
Or even think of that neath mistletoes  
Which oft before she did beneath the rose.

When of her fat physician she inquired,  
"May I along the sun-beamed sidewalk stroll?"  
He budged and, as he learnedly perspired,  
Shunned the idea from the depths of his soul.  
"May I," she larked again, "stand on parole  
And watch the passers at the streetside fence?"  
"My dear," he answered, "have some self-control:  
You must not move nor figure moving hence."  
"Oh, let me read the newspape," she entreated.  
"My whole plan then," said he, "would be defeated."  
"Some careless chat allow me," she implored.  
"You must have absolute rest," he repeated.  
"Must I not think?" she cried; and "No!" he roared.  
"I'd like to write," she grumbled, "some light fiction."  
"Oh, that you may," quoth he, "without restriction."

So, in her bedroom under six months' sentence  
 Of her prescriber, firmly to abstain  
 From sound and color, and, in pale repentance,  
 Bar the vocations of the heart and brain,  
 Flimflam, becoming roomed and quite inane,  
 Wrote, for an editor, a tale of love,  
 Wherein the villain, Ralph, shot out his brain,  
 And left the hero cooing with his dove.  
 The tale was manuscripted, bought and printed:  
 And in it much of future power hinted;  
 The plot was dashing, from a rest-cure view,  
 And thrillingly with local color tinted.  
 Urged by success and by the doctor, who  
 Wished mental truce maintained, she wrote a book,  
 Which by the ears the reading public took.

What though the public has resilient ears,  
 Which turn to every moo or bark or boo,  
 This genius made them jury of her peers,  
 And for a fame among them came to sue.  
 And so we gave our graces as we do  
 Whenever wealth and woman's beauty claim us;  
 And Flimflam woke one morn with cool halloo  
 To find her nom de plume becoming famous.  
 To what new glories was our heiress put:  
 Praise at each hand and flatterers at each foot,  
 Save where occasional critic chid her work,  
 Showing a heart as black and dry as soot.  
 Praise she would take and honest blame not shirk;  
 But when black-hearted, heartless men reviled her,  
 They did not pain and yet somehow they riled her.

But Flimflam was an aimless, amiable maid,  
Whose anger lived no longer than a laugh,  
And with a pious reticence obeyed  
Fame's law, its kisses took and eke its chaff.  
Yet it was woe to see some numbskull calf  
Pour forth his ignorance and basely hint  
One half her book unfit to read, and half,  
Though fairly readable, unfit to print.  
Then envious friends did reinforce the strife  
And give her book the bludgeon and the knife:  
It had no tone, its characters no air;  
Some said the whole book was untrue to life.  
Flimflam, like Cæsar, thought all battles fair,  
And as to show how much of life she knew,  
Thought for a moment; then to poesy flew.

One blue vein throbbed upon her lissome throat;  
She muttered something which I need not quote.  
And then, with soul from hate or grief remote,  
Without a memorandum, sketch or note,  
She sat her at her escrutaire and wrote.



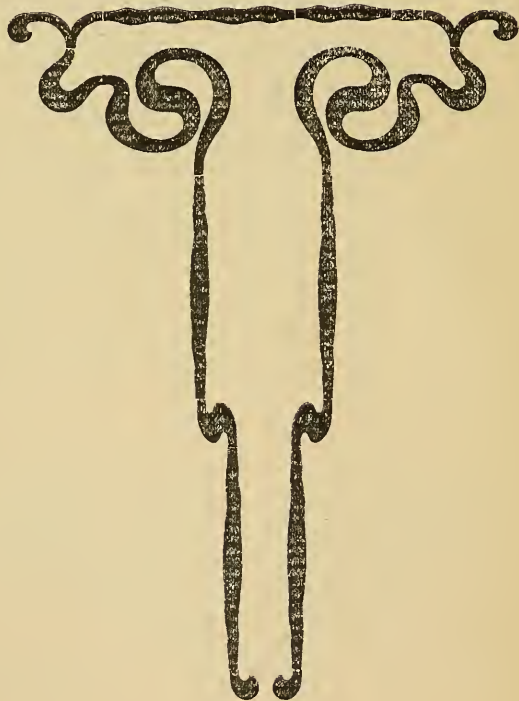
THE DISTRESSING VICISSITUDES  
OF A LADY IN SKY-HIGH SOCIETY

BY

BEATRICE VAN SLOPE

A HE and a she were mock-married one Fall  
By a hand-me-down monk at a masquerade ball;  
And living adroitly a year and a quarter,  
Were blessed in that time with a son and a daughter.  
Their marital duties thus more than fulfilled,  
The dame kangarooed to the stage, though unskilled  
In the drama or e'en in the part she was billed.  
But, knowing the programmers like to be thrilled,  
She proceeded, as her introductory course  
In the technic of acting, to get a divorce.  
But when her complaint had been heard by the judge,  
That proud-bellied lord of the law exclaimed "Fudge!  
Great gall of Galanthus! By gracious! By Jeeminy!  
Of causes for cutting the ties I don't see many,  
Not many, and I'll be a son of a gun  
If of all your base charges you've proven a one."  
Then, mere by mistake, plaintiff slipt a wee wink;  
It caught the Court's eye and it made the judge think.  
What followed instanter: decree of divorce  
And all the allowances law could enforce,  
Late suppers, a marriage, more scandal, some weeping,  
Vile rumors and fits of hysterics in keeping;  
And what with divorce and appeals intermingled,  
She hardly knew if she was married or singled.  
And her husband, the judge, with his hair and his wig amuss,  
Said, "My dear, if your case is reversed, you're polygamous."  
And so, to escape those annoying appeals  
In which she was tangled from earrings to heels,  
Her physician informally hinted elopement;  
She answered him "Yep," for she knew not what "nope" meant.

From pleasure to escapade, fancy to folly,  
She wended, like Zaza, and finally — golly!  
As wife of a bald-headed real-estate man,  
With the best of champagners now flutters her fan.  
And though this sad tale will affright and appal, I know,  
Don't think it too strong, for I have not told all I know.





THIS bright-eyed jocular then forsook  
Her cure, to try effects with foe and friend,  
Hilariously to blot the blushes strook  
By her bad rhyme, and twit them to the end.  
Loud howled the stately dames to reprehend  
The rude insulter of their peccadilloes  
And quash the French-gilt fairy who had penned  
The thorny words upon their rosy pillows.  
Flimflam beheld the skirty tempest draw  
Round her poetic bang upon the jaw,  
And laughed from pit to dome, (rude, I admit)  
Lampooned their tears, and also muttered "pshaw!"  
And they, like cheap lead-pencils, showed their grit,  
Out-bawled her song and, having noised their places,  
Sniffed through the nostrilled air-holes of their faces.

You may remember how your sire would spank  
At your infernal regions long ago;  
Then, granting habeas corpus, calmly rank  
His anguish more than that he did bestow.  
Some such reactionary, pious woe  
'Gan creep in Flimflam's ever-whispering breast;  
For, having caused her censors' tears to flow,  
She downed and wept as much as all the rest.  
Fastidious maid, most exquisite in moving,  
Too dreamy for a wakeful world's reproving,  
Too mild for hate, too sweet for bitter quarrel;  
Asked the Great Witness of her soul behooving  
God to inquire why fame withheld the laurel;  
And fools who found her poems uncelestial,  
Were studied and found plenteously bestial.

'Twas when the branches, visited by May,  
Put on their springstyle vestiture of green,  
That Flimflam garbed her secret soul in gray  
And sang a love-song to an absent mien,  
Great California's greatest magazine  
Offered a prize for a short poem found  
Not harmful to the state, nor yet obscene,  
Nor prejudicial judged on any ground.  
This magazine, "The Sunstroke" styled, was one  
Given its name in honor of the sun,  
Because the sun, by setting, made us great,  
Ne'er setting elsewhere save in jest or fun,  
While nobly here in this, the "Sunset State."  
So have the poets in their poems said it,  
And given California all the credit.

To this fair competition Flimflam bent,  
For that her heart was in a mighty trance,  
And lacked in living all that living meant,  
As, dancing, lacked the spirit of the dance.  
Thus did her love, which found no equal glance,  
Take at its window-panes a baleful station,  
And dream that love, now lost in love's mischance,  
Being writ, might purchase wistful approbation.  
The hue and composition of her heart,  
Made great with energies engaged apart,  
Had poured the crimson deluge to her brain,  
And there escaped in fantasies of art.  
So did her stately passion humbly deign  
To sip the praise of fools and bid them shove  
A drink to match the drink of foolish love.

LOVE-CHANT

BY

BEATRICE VAN SLOPE

'T WAS in the dreaming age:  
I sang among the flowers  
And walked a scenic stage  
Where dream-birds toned the bowers,  
And far-seen windows gleamed in alien towers,  
And love threw down its gage.

I felt within my soul  
The presage of a thought,  
Which negligently stole—  
Though guardedly 'twas fought—  
Into a peril-place of songs and aught,  
Beyond my young control.

Brightly the years bestrew  
The ornaments of Spring;  
Soft as sweet, sweet as new,  
(And flowers it did bring)  
Came the great untranslated happening  
Which was a dream of you.

My dream was of a god;  
And yet the dream was you.  
I saw the ambrosial sod,  
Besprent with grass-borne dew,  
Bear your soft living marble veined with blue,  
And shimmer as you trod.

High-hung with beamy charms,  
The scene grew large and bright  
And echoed love's alarms,  
For, oh, I did invite  
The weird clasp of a continent of light  
With superhuman arms.

The apparition grew,  
Its brow with roses bound,  
Distilling attar-dew,  
Oh beauty stilling sound!  
Outshone the shining evidence around  
The celestial interview.

Oh, black Stymphalian birds,  
That flutter full of sorrow  
And carry secret words  
From twilight unto morrow,  
Haunt not his hill nor droop above his farrow,  
The choicest of the herds.

Farewell! The great are lonely;  
Go thy inferior ways.  
Let me consider only  
My vacant house of days.  
Or queenly sit where tragic wisdom plays  
To thrones whose queens are thronely.

You came but to depart;  
So let my own soul go.  
Yet with your lowly art,  
You made the heavens glow;  
And with your heedless arm imposed the blow  
That broke a poet's heart.



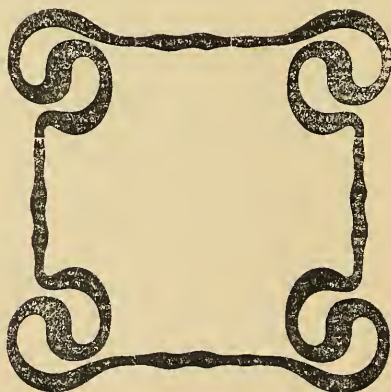


THIS lacrimose lay,  
Her fruition of sighs,  
A delight in its way,  
But the ruth of her eyes,  
Was writ in a day  
And despatched to the wise  
Referees of the fray.  
And that learned assize  
Read the poem, and they,  
Without guile or disguise,  
Allowed it entree  
In compete for the prize  
And said in a way  
It was hard to despise,  
Yet was not raisonne  
A la mode in their eyes,  
As it did not portray,  
With whyes and therebyes,  
Our State and the lay  
Of its mountains or bay  
Or its prunes or the size  
Of the last crop of hay.

As may you surmise,  
Flinflam said "Good day,"  
Wiped a beam from her eyes,  
And 'tis needless to say,  
She had not won the prize.

Her poem was not badly written or dull or  
Without showing signs of a talented skull or  
An art that gave promise of bettering soon;  
But it took not the cake nor captured the cruller,  
Oh, it lured not the guerdon, it brought her no boon,  
Not for want of strong lines but it lacked local color.

List, lovers of song: here appeareth the pome  
That worked on the judges and brought the prize home  
(It will work on you also, though not in that way.)  
It was writ in the gloaming, it's filled up with gloam  
And the true divine flatulence flavors the lay;  
Howe'er let the troubadour blow his own foam:



CALIFORNIAN HYMN TO THE SUN

O WEST-BOUND sun, I importune,  
 As you descend Sierra's tops,  
 Shine on my grape and light my prune,  
 Illuminate my growing crops.

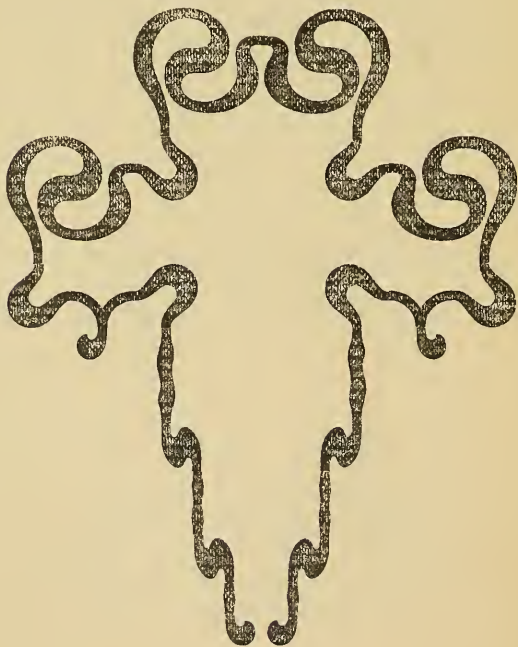
Scowl on the streams of wicked East,  
 But smile on Sacramento's trout;  
 And when your working hours are ceased,  
 Set by the Southern Pacific Route.

O sunset, dear to every breast,  
 Thou'rt like our fields of well-known poppies,  
 Making our setting sun the best,  
 And Eastern sunsets only copies.

O climate-maker of our zone,  
 The greatest name at my behest  
 I give you: henceforth be you known  
 As Native Sun of the Golden West.



UPON the morrow, when the elegant sun  
With ready beam o'er the blue mountain blinked,  
Flimflam upon the day the start had won.  
Soon to her ink-well's curb the pen was brinked;  
She stirred the inky depths of Fame's precinct;  
Thought after thought in fancy's rhythm was linked;  
And she prognosticating: "I'll be kinked,  
If, when I've done, these chaps are not extinct."





POETS AND CRITICS

BY

BEATRICE VAN SLOPE

O FAME, lift up thine eyes to this devotion,  
 From far East where thy eastern tresses lave  
 Upon the morning on Columbo's ocean  
 To where thy locks droop in Balboa's wave—  
 Where western fogs obscure the poet's flight,  
 Glance, thou with eyes of one almighty blast of light.

I know too many bards have coarsely fed  
 Where the Pierian fount once filled the poet;  
 Drained is that channel now: a maid may tread  
 Where once it glistered and not get her toe wet.  
 Yet critics they have lost the dope to burn us  
 Since they, for inspiration, drank up Lake Avernus.

Your busy poet in a year will yearn  
 With ninety-nine emotions in his midst,  
 With waxless pang, soul-quake and anguish burn  
 For ninnygirls who never did but "didst,"  
 And throbbing part for variegated women,  
 Or praise of pomp or pinhole, heaven or persimmon.

Whereat the critic, anxious to effuse,  
 Sees butterfly-wings on the pallid moth;  
 Or, moody, foams at mouth, and then shampoos  
 His hair with all the hydrophobic froth  
 Ere he vouchsafes to quash a little verse,  
 And prove his own transcendant knowledge with a curse.

Hoarse Jacobs braying at hush lullabies  
And wrestling with the angels of great thought  
And laughing greedily when Psyche sighs,  
And, knowing not the meaning, call it naught,  
You have replaced the genius with the jack;  
Go to remorse's knee and take your paddywhack.

A town coerced with alien ignorance,  
Commercial tricksters, wealth's perfidious tribe,  
Killers of Truth, preventers of romance,—  
Has made its art the creature of their bribe,  
Depicted squash, to please their occupations,  
And roasts-of-beef to draw their slow imaginations.

To feed these red-necked caterers with art  
That bears some rude resemblance to the real,  
Bought scribes have glorified the brokers' mart  
And made its commerce mean their time's ideal,  
Flattered the fuddled merchant at his club,  
Pictured his groceries and versified his grub.

Foul clerks of wealth their sophistries unbowel,  
And mix opinions with their alcoholics;  
Crowned by the Trust and sceptered with a trowel,  
They fill the world's book with their hyperbolics,  
Gurgle with mirth above the winy glass,  
For wine lends wit to him who else would be an ass.

Debased in love, ashamed at innocence,  
They hang the figleaf to the infant's hips,  
Invite the famous and revile them hence,  
And praise the climate round the singer's lips,  
Go down the line and spit in each spittoon,  
And raise the art of criticism at each saloon.

The poet scarce opines that poetry  
 Is quite a bloodless battle, — fool unwary—  
 When literary guns knock his debris  
 Into the thirty-first of February;  
 For on the cohorts of new song still wreak  
 The unadmired their vengeance from their mountain pique.

By these no poetry is writ by rule,  
 No rule correct or line to be admired,  
 Whose thread unwinds not from a classic spool  
 Of ancient make and patent long expired.  
 Watchers behind their low, familiar fence,  
 To them each stranger is a peril in suspense.

Not easily new law the wrong supplants;  
 Loath is mankind relinquishing dead splendors:  
 When men have lost the art of wearing pants,  
 With smiles of pride they yet will wear suspenders;  
 Yet unafraid, peculiarly, great minds  
 Will make their laws at variance with littler kinds.

One jester, surfeit in his own conceit,  
 Cynic by trade and by the column sour,  
 When shown a peacock, moans, "What ugly feet!"  
 And, with a sneer, he feels like Schopenhauer.  
 The cat feels like the tiger: what is same  
 Honors the cat; their difference is the tiger's fame.

With scarce the flesh to keep his bones from rattling,  
 A teardrop on the tip of his blue nose,  
 Fond midnight finds him with fond poesy battling,  
 Impeaching sweet-sung words in wretched prose.  
 He writes: (forgetting that he praised it once)  
 "Twas written by a duffer to amuse a dunce."

From criticism to libel is no plunge;  
A smirk of satire he must not omit.  
And to the skull that clasps his mental sponge,  
He lifts his thumb and strikes a spark of wit;  
Laughs jocularly as if slopping soup;  
Uncorks the guffaws of a public prone to whoop.

Alas poor pessimist! Sage sophomoric,  
That scratches his Thesaurus for a thought!  
Should someone pump him full of paregoric,  
We soon would have an optimist or naught,  
That would not lift from tomes of melancholy,  
Twist up and write a plagiarism on human folly.

And many a weekly rag its critic pays,  
Tatterdemalions of the ink brigade,  
Who think their satire vitriol that slays,  
That satire which is weak as lemonade.  
Logic? They would not touch that pointed tool;  
For logic is an instrument to wound a fool.

Discriminations nice they oft attempt,  
With dingy finger over greatness poking;  
The untamed lion is to them unkempt;  
Their solemn ignorance, by wisely joking,  
Conceals itself and simpers unconfessed  
Beneath a coward ambiguity of jest.

They know the clouds are better than the sky;  
Blame the expression ere they praise the face;  
Too low the bottom and the top too high,  
Although the middle seems in proper place.  
So can the flippant, filibustering boozier  
Knock holes in cherries and steam through them in a cruiser.

They say: "Too young to think, too old to learn,  
This poet grates upon my pia mater."  
Sweethearts, know that the poetry you spurn  
Grates on your prose because the verse is greater.  
Too easy to be jarred, you are too nice:  
There's more to virtue than the virtue shocked at vice.

Now, having splintered his disgust on merit,  
It might be thought a cynic of some pride  
Attacking misbehavior, would not spare it,  
And when an ignoramus unsupplied  
With equilibrium, attempts to soar,  
Drag him to earth and let him live no more.

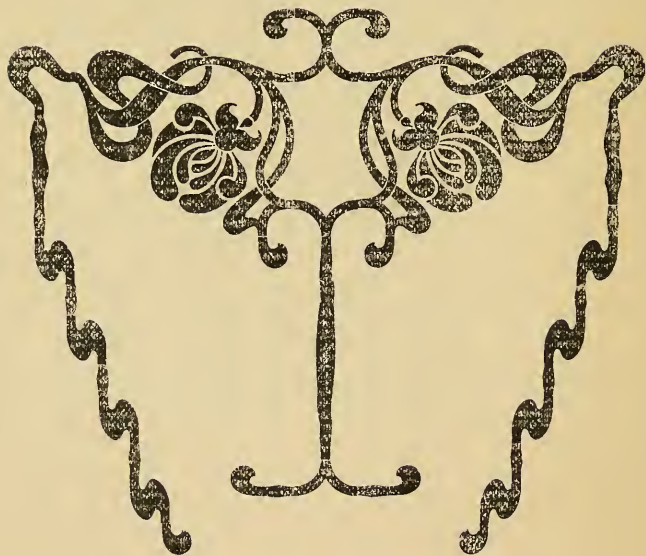
Not so: see how some pumpkin-headed fop,  
Without the passion that might warm the chill  
From his cold intellect, nor, in his top,  
The intellect to simulate a thrill  
Of passion — Gee! Beneath his bready novel,  
Reviewers, gorged with platitudinous praise, will grovel.

They say: "This author knows his native ground;  
To him no secret is the plow-boy's mood;  
His knowledge of sunbonnets is profound;  
His characters are moral and subdued;  
With every page, the plot" (thick always) "thickens;  
Egads, he knocks the very Balzac out of Dickens!"

Thus not all praise will at all greatness light:  
Their brains must feel at home or else are dumb,  
Like those peculiar matches which ignite  
Only against the box in which they come.  
Yet what their precious praise will not set fire  
Their lack of understanding scorches in their ire.

To genius they prefer some Tom Thumb's terrors;  
The genuine they banish for the sham.  
A platitude set with grammatic errors  
Gleams to their bogus brains an epigram.  
A sooty chimney on a rainy night  
Shines to their owlish eyeballs like a ray of light.

And thus the pigeon-toed archsatirist,  
Preparing for a long ironic frolic,  
Goes aching to his task and gives a twist  
That makes his precinct seem the country's colic.  
And futures find on Poesy's cheek his blame  
Cut black, a beauty-patch of everlasting shame.



LAST WISHES

BY

BEATRICE VAN SLOPE

THIS exquisite malady that steals my brain,  
The master-current of my livelong thought,  
Unlinks my life and breaks the spirit-chain  
That once with animated flesh was fraught.  
How I unwish the things that once I wished!  
And think of seasons flooded with false tides,  
Upon whose wave dead infamies are fished,  
As the lewd gondola to pleasure glides.,

Nay, 'tis iniquitous to ban those joys  
Which sped their best to make me laugh with them,  
Hard laughter which a nervous world employs  
To advertise it, stuck with gold and gem.  
Yet, sitting in the afterward of life —  
O afterward of joy in forward years! —  
I think my pleasure was with wish at strife  
Which now against my wishing disappears.

I'd like the sunshine, were it not so bright.  
I'd like to ramble were I not so weary.  
Food I would care for had I appetite,  
And books endear me were they not so dreary.  
Artists would please me if they had more art;  
Old women soothe were I a gossip-monger;  
Wise men delight me if they had more heart;  
And fools would be my passion were I younger.

I'd like the scenery, were I a bird.

I'd crave the rose were I a honeybee;

Enjoy a spelling-match, if a long word;

Dote on a dozen were I four times three.

With every thrilling fool I would concur,

Had I but half his inference of brains.

Love for mine enemy I'd not defer,

Saving for fear he'd love me for my pains.

Poems allure me when they break my spell;

And pictures when the painter limns with might.

Music I love, when it is musicked well

And the musician's face is out of sight.

Birds would induce me as they wing the blue,

Were I one of their airy caravan.

And man would suit me, did the right one sue;

And women I would love were I a man.

Thus it beseems no thing is perfect for me,

No person adequate to wishing power,

No tempest violent when my thoughts are stormy,

No lily equal when I wish a flower.

Yet I have seemed enjoyable and careless,

And made the light heart laugh, the fool seem great.

A clown I lived, and, like a clown, die heirless

Of thought or child or good to emulate.





WEALTH

BY

BEATRICE VAN SLOPE

OH, why was I born on the summit of riches,  
 With nothing above but impossible sky,  
 While the brooklet below, in its bright-winding ditches,  
 Goes into the woodland and leaves my hill dry.

In the acres spread out as my earthy foundation,  
 The farm-girl sings low by the lake her desire.  
 Lost, lost to my life is that loved inspiration  
 That flows through hope's garden to slake the soul's fire.

Why have I not lived where the yearner, while praying,  
 Comprehends that the world can reply to her prayer,  
 And fancy can fly to the clouds overswaying  
 While weariness sleeps at the foot of the stair.

Here in my bright castle, whose implements golden  
 Were given unasked, I am paying Hell's price.  
 With nothing to clasp save the shapes oft beholden,  
 And nothing to study in pleasure but vice.



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